



California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation

Staff News

Communicating with Professionals in Corrections and Parole

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The Staff News Interview 15 Minutes With...



Matt Powers

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Matt Powers was appointed as the General Manager for the Prison Industry Authority in August 2004 and oversees approximately 670 staff 5,600 inmates, and a budget of \$170 million. He has over 23 years of service with the Sacramento Police Department serving as the Deputy Chief of Police as well as in other leadership positions.



Federal Bureau of Prisons Director Harley G. Lappin (l) discusses prison policies with Secretary Hickman during a recent CDCR visit to the nation's capitol. Many states as well as the federal government are following the CDCR reform efforts with great interest.

Q: What is your vision for the Prison Industry Authority?

A: My vision for PIA is very simple and straightforward: "Grow the business, to grow the inmate workforce" because employed inmates and parolees mean safer prisons and safer communities.

Q: As the General Manager for the Prison Industry Authority what do you see as your primary function in the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation?

A: PIA's primary function is to provide job skill training to inmates and assist them in obtaining meaningful employ-

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Leadership Development Program Begins at CDCR; Retirements Spur Recruitment Effort

The California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation in cooperation with Sacramento State begins an innovative series of continuing education classes on Jan. 11 to train CDCR staff to become future leaders of the department.

This is the first of a three-stage leadership training and succession strategy to assure that public safety and reforms continue uninterrupted into the next decade.

"With the large number of retirements expected, this department has an obligation to begin training the leaders of tomorrow – today," said CDCR Secretary **Roderick Q. Hickman**. "We know those best and brightest are out there – in the institutions and in the offices statewide – providing a high level of public safety and public service. This program will get them ready to assume leadership opportunities available today – and maintain the necessary momentum for

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ment upon parole. PIA plays an important role in the rehabilitation efforts of the Department as we are finding success in assisting parolees to obtain employment and consequently reducing the number of inmates that are returning to our institutions.

By pursuing our business success and serving our customers, our workforce will grow. Over the last few years, the number of inmates working in PIA has declined. My objective is to help parolees acquire meaningful careers, thereby becoming taxpayers rather than tax recipients. While working for the Sacramento Police Department, I know the price that society pays for crime and the consequences of a parolee hitting the streets without a job.

Q: How does the reorganization of CDCR impact PIA?

A: PIA's connection with CDCR has been strengthened with the reorganization of the Department. We have formed new relationships where we can help one another, and we are finding that our goals are very consistent.

Obviously, we need the support of the Department to use our products and services, and conversely, PIA has been very successful in our training and rehabilitation efforts, which have become an important part of the CDCR's overall direction.

We are always looking for new ways to support CDCR. For example the Prison Industry Board recently approved the construction of new modular buildings to support CDCR's efforts in meeting its space needs.

Together, we are overcoming obstacles that will allow us to grow our business and help reduce the num-



PIA General Manager Matt Powers

ber of inmates that are returning to prison.

Q: What strategies have you implemented to direct the course of the organization?

A: Since PIA is a business, one of the first tools that I needed for the organization was the development of a Strategic Business Plan from which we could establish a new direction.

In February 2005, our new plan was introduced to our staff that provides for a straightforward approach for implementing our four new goals: achieve self-sufficiency, build inmate success, exceed customer expectations, and promote and support PIA.

This business plan includes new marketing, operational, and development approaches and a new organizational structure. These are areas that are normally needed by any successful enterprise to guide their development.

Q: Are you seeing progress with your Strategic Business Plan?

A. Unlike most Strategic Business Plans that just gather dust, ours is a dynamic, living document. I meet each week with my Executive staff to re-

view the status of our plan and examine our progress. Integral in our efforts is PIA's ability to be profitable. Our plan is to grow our business; however, we cannot grow if we are not profitable.

As a business we will be concentrating on producing high quality and competitively priced products that are delivered in a timely manner. PIA recorded its highest revenue ever in fiscal year 2004-05 of over \$170 million.

This is a testament to all of our staff who have worked so diligently during the last year.

Q: How is your plan addressing the need to increase employment for PIA inmates once they parole?

A: PIA is focusing significant attention on the successful reintegration of PIA's inmates back into society. We are working in various areas to enhance our Inmate Employability Program by collaborating with pre- and post-release programs.

PIA has established our own Job Referral Program that was developed to identify and assist qualified PIA parolees with job referrals to employers.

Nominated parolees can contact Job Referral Coordinator Heidi Maule (916.358.1729) who will assist the parolee in job interview readiness. She can provide employer contacts and other job search/community services information.

The process begins when a PIA supervisor nominates an inmate for this program. The inmate must be within 120 days of parole and have:

- Completed an industry-accredited certification program or re-

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ceived a PIA Certificate of Proficiency,

- No adverse work-related CDCR 128s or 115s within the last two years.
- Ratings of three or better on two consecutive CDCR 101s.
- Skill ratings of two or better on the PIA Final Evaluation.
- Attitude and performance ratings of two or better on the PIA Final Evaluation.

After nomination, Heidi prepares the inmate's work history and resume. She also provides materials, i.e., on federal bonding, State and federal tax credits, IRS package (if taxes are owed), child support, and education grant programs.

Q: How is PIA coordinating its efforts with local communities?

A: In September, PIA kicked-off its "Community Re-entry Project," a collaborative effort of community and faith-based organizations in San Diego that assists PIA inmates in transitioning back into the local area. The program establishes a network of

services that are coordinated by a central support structure—a team of transition coordinators. By assisting offenders to obtain services immediately upon release from custody, they can avoid situations that foster re-offending. The project is built upon the "best practice" of beginning the development of a reentry pathway for the parolee at least nine months prior to release. We will be replicating this project in other areas of the state in the coming year.

Q: What other changes are you proposing?

A: One area that we are reviewing is the process in which inmates are selected to participate in PIA. We are finding that if we can be more selective on the pre-screening of inmates, we can be more successful in matching them to the types of jobs that we have available. This will translate into greater success for them upon parole.

Q: How is your program funded?

A: Our only source of revenue is from the sale of our products and services. Many people may not real-

ize that PIA is self-funded. On one hand, PIA is just like any other business in that we must generate revenue to continue our operation. On the other hand, PIA is uniquely different from other businesses in that our primary objective is to hire as large an inmate staff as possible so the greatest number of inmates can receive job skills. This is contrary to the mission of most businesses. PIA balances our need to be competitive with our responsibility to provide training for the maximum number of inmates as possible.

Q: What do you see for the future?

A: While we made great progress this year, much more needs to be done. There is a need to hire more inmates as PIA only employs a small percentage of the total CDCR population. Our Strategic Business Plan provides the direction on how we will grow our business even further. I am projecting that this year we will increase our revenue to a total of \$187 million, which would set another record for the organization. We are also looking at developing a number of new and dynamic programs, which will further grow our inmate workforce and support CDCR's public safety mission.

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of Corrections and Rehabilitation is workforce excellence," CDCR Secretary Roderick Q. Hickman said. "Our success depends on our ability to attract, train, develop, and retain a qualified workforce. The partnership with Sac State and Caltrans puts us on track to attain that goal and ensure that we'll have qualified employees that will be well equipped in meet-

ing the demands of the corrections profession."

Fast Facts:

- A large number of retirements during the next five years will leave a deficit of correctional agency leadership.
- This program assures the "Best and the Brightest" amongst Ex-

ecutive Staff in all job classifications have the opportunity to pursue continuing education and management opportunities after attending the Leadership Development Program.

- More than 6,700 correctional officer staff will need to be hired over the next five years to keep up with the retirements.